

this letter serves to confirm the County of Merced's support of SBC Pacific Bell;s entry into the long distance market.

We support SBC Pacific Bell in their efforts because we believe that in order for our community to enjoy a truly open and fully competitive market-more choioces, better service, savings and convenience-every industry player must be eligible to compete fairly and equitably.

SBC Pacific Bell's entry inot long distance comes at a time when the nation's telecommunications industry is in significant turmoil. Competition in the industry is now the norm, and it is necessary for regulators to apply fair and balanced rules to all providers in order to ensure that competition is based upon investments, technology and souond business practices.

We understand that your commission has already approved long-distance applications from 23 states. Over 141 million Americans are currently experiencing the benefits of a competitive telecommunications market. Now is our turn.

The County of merced, and all of California, deserves these benefits. Please join us in our support of increased competition. All Californians will reap the benefits of your approval of this matter.

Thank you

Gloria Cortez Keene
Supervisor, District One
County of Merced.